

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1614

FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UNSC, IS, LE, SY, XF
SUBJECT: SOUTHERN LEBANON

REF: (A) STATE 49214; (B) STATE 49215

SUMMARY: ALLON'S INITIAL AND PERSONAL REACTION TO THE
IDEA OF A UN FORCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON IS GENERALLY
NEGATIVE, BUT HE WILL CONSIDER IT WITH HIS CABINET
COLLEAGUES BEFORE GIVING US A FULL RESPONSE. HIS MAIN
POINT IS THAT SUCH A FORCE COULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO
INTERFERE WITH THE OPERATIONS OF THE GOOD FENCE. HE
ALSO SAID THAT IT COULD NOT BE USED TO "INTERNATIONALIZE"
THE ARAB FORCES IN LEBANON AND THAT, ONCE ESTABLISHED,
IT COULD NOT BE GIVEN ADDITIONAL DUTIES WHICH ISRAEL
COULD NOT ACCEPT. END SUMMARY.

1. I SAW FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON MARCH 7 TO SEEK HIS
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VIEWS ON THE SUGGESTION OF A UN FORCE IN SOUTHERN
LEBANON. I SAID AMBASSADOR PARKER WOULD BE SEEING
BOUTROS ON HIS RETURN FROM CAIRO TO MAKE POINTS IN
REFTEL A, AND I THEN WENT OVER POINTS IN REFTEL B.

2. ALLON ASKED SEVERAL QUESTIONS FOR PURPOSES OF
CLARIFICATION: IS FORCE INTENDED ONLY TO MAINTAIN

LAW AND ORDER INTERNALLY AND NOT TO PLAY ANY PART IN LEBANESE-ISRAELI RELATIONS? DOES THE SUGGESTION REFER TO THE USE OF ARAB FORCES OR ONLY NON-ARAB FORCES? WHAT WOULD BE THE AREA TO BE COVERED? WHAT IS THE REACTION OF DAMASCUS? WOULD GENERAL SIILASVUO BE THE COMMANDER? WOULD BOUTROS BE INFORMED WE WERE CONSULTING WITH ISRAEL?

3. I REPLIED THAT MY UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT THE FORCE WOULD BE USED ONLY FOR INTERNAL PURPOSES AND THAT ITS FUNCTIONS WOULD BE A COMBINATION OF POLICE AND MILITARY OBSERVATION DUTIES. IT MIGHT BE DRAWN INITIALLY FROM EXISTING UN FORCES, SUCH AS UNEF, UNDOF, UNTSO AN UNFICYP, AND THEN EXPANDED. IT WOULD BE DIRECTED AT ENSURING STABILITY WITHIN LEBANON AND WOULD NOT PATROL THE BORDER. I SAID I HAD NO WORD AS TO THE SYRIAN REACTION TO SUCH A PROPOSAL AND THAT COMMAND DETAILS HAD NOT YET BEEN WORKED OUT. I REPEATED (AS I HAD POINTED OUT EARLIER) THAT BOUTROS WOULD BE INFORMED WE WERE CONSULTING WITH ISRAEL.

4. ALLON THEN SAID HE WOULD CABLE RABIN IN WASHINGTON ABOUT OUR DISCUSSION AND HOPED THE SUBJECT WOULD ARISE DURING THE PRIME MINISTER'S CONVERSATIONS THERE. HE SAID HE WOULD CONSULT WITH OTHER MINISTERS BEFORE GIVING ME A COMPLETE REPLY BUT HE LIKED TO POINT OUT SOME ASPECTS WHICH WOULD CLEARLY NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO ISRAEL.

5. THIS SUGGESTION CANNOT BE USED AS MEANS OF GIVING CONFIDENTIAL

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ARAB FORCES IN LEBANON AN INTERNATIONAL STATUS. THE FORCE WOULD HAVE TO BE A NON-ARAB FORCE, AS ARE PRESENT UN CONTINGENTS. ISRAEL WOULD NOT OBJECT TO THE USE OF FORCES FROM COUNTRIES WITH WHICH IT DOES NOT HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND HE REFERRED TO THE GHANAIAN BATTALION IN UNEF. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE SAID UNTSO FORCES SHOULD BE EXCLUDED BECAUSE THEY INCLUDE SOVIET OBSERVERS WHO COULD BE EXPECTED TO MAINTAIN THEIR KNOWN CONTACTS WITH LEFTISTS FORCES.

6. SUCH A FORCE, COMMITTED TO INTERNAL NEEDS, COULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO HAVE A ROLE IN RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND LEBANON AND ESPECIALLY COULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO HAVE ANY ROLE REGARDING THE OPERATIONS OF THE GOOD FENCE. ALLON REPEATED: NEITHER THE FORCE NOR THE BODY GIVING IT ITS MANDATE COULD INTERVENE IN ANY WAY IN BILATERAL MATTERS. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE FEARED THAT WHEN SUCH A FORCE HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED, THE DAY WOULD COME WHEN THE SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD INSTRUCT

THE FORCE TO CARRY OUT SOME DUTIES BEYOND THOSE PRESENTLY FORESEEN. THEREFORE, ISRAEL WOULD AGREE TO SUCH A FORCE ONLY IF THERE WERE A PRIOR AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ISRAEL THAT THE U.S. WOULD USE ITS SC VETO TO BLOCK THE FORCE BEING AUTHORIZED TO PERFORM ADDITIONAL DUTIES WHICH WOULD BE CONTRARY TO ISRAELI INTERESTS.

7. ALLON UNDERTOOK TO CONSULT WITH HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES IN HIS CAPACITY AS ACTING PRIME MINISTER AND TO GIVE US A FULL RESPONSE PRIOR TO BOUTROS' RETURN FROM CAIOR. IN SUMMING UP, HE STRESSED AGAIN THE ISRAELI VIEW THAT SOUTHERN LEBANON NEEDS A PURELY LEBANESE FORCE AND A UN FORCE WOULD POSTPONE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LEBANESE CENTRAL AUTHORITY. HE EMPHASIZED AGAIN THAT THE OPERATIONS OF THE GOOD FENCE COULD NOT BE AFFECTED AND THAT SARKIS WOULD ATTEMPT TO USE SUCH A FORCE TO CUT

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OFF ISRAELI INFLUENCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. HE ALSO TOUCHED ON THE DIFFICULTY OF FINDING AND ADMINISTERING ACCEPTABLE TROOP CONTINGENTS. HE ENDED BY SAYING HE WAS NOT FAVORABLY DISPOSED, BUT HE WOULD CONSIDER THE IDEA AND GET BACK TO US.

8. COMMENT: THIS INITIAL ISRAELI REACTION CAN PROBABLY BEST BE DESCRIBED AS RUNNING FROM TEPID TO COLD. IT WAS INTERESTING TO OBSERVE HOW THE MORE ALLON AND HIS STAFF (GENERAL RAVIV, MFA INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH, AND BAVLI OF THE NORTH AMERICAN DEPARTMTNE) TURNED THE IDEA OVER IN THEIR MINDS THE MORE OBJECTIONS THEY FOUND TO IT. CLEARLY, THE MAINTENANCE OF UNIMPEDED ACCESS TO AND THROUGH THE GOOD FENCE IS GOING TO BE A KEY CONSIDERATION FOR THEM. THEY WILL RESIST ATTEMPTS TO BLOCK ACCESS BY LEBANESE TO THE FENCE AS WELL AS ANY FORM OF INTERNATIONAL CONTROL WHICH WOULD HINDER THEM IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH THEIR "FRIENDS" IN LEBANON. ALLON WAS FRANK IN SAYING - AS PERES HAS INTIMATED BEFORE - THAT THE GOOD FENCE IS A CONCEPT WHICH THE ISRAELIS ENVISION AS HAVING AN IMPORTANT AND BROAD POLITICAL EFFECT IN THE LONG RUN. ANOTHER PRIMARY CONSIDERATION FOR THE ISRAELIS WILL BE THEIR ABILITY TO TIE US DOWN TO A COMMITMENT TO VETO ANY ACTIONS BY A UN FORCE OF WHICH THEY DO NOT APPROVE. FROM ALLON'S COMMENTS AT THIS MEETING, IT IS EVIDENT THAT IT WILL TAKE A MAJOR EFFORT TO CONVINCE THE ISRAELIS THAT A UN FORCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WOULD BE MORE TO THEIR ADVANTAGE THAN THE PRESENT SITUATION.

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